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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the relationship between public policy on languages and national economic development focuses on formulation of policy, especially in the case of Australia. It begins with a brief history of language policy-making in that country since the 1960s, including early proposals and a 1990 report that has been adopted as a basis for Queensland language policy. The second section examines two primary factors motivating development of national language policy: national economic development in the international context, and human rights. Reference is made to the Universal Declaration of Language Rights, a document in the process of being developed by the World Federation of Modern Language Teachers. A third section looks at the nature of policy-making as a decision making or problem solving process, both for the parent discipline of applied linguistics and for language policy-making or language-in-education planning. Finally, the structure of language policy is examined, and six essential elements of rational language policy are outlined. Salient features of Queensland language policy and corollary needs based on Queensland social needs are identified. Other aspects of the Queensland policy are also discussed briefly. It is concluded that improved, rational, systematic language policy-making, realized in sound language-in-education policy, is a priority for the 1990s. (MSE)

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LANGUAGE POLICY IN THE CONTEXT OF REALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS AND MAXIMIZING NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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I INTRODUCTION

In the English-speaking world, Australia has been at the forefront in formalizing and adopting a national policy on languages. Indeed, in a survey of language-in-education planning around the world recently undertaken for an article that has appeared in the most recent edition of the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* [Cambridge University Press, 1990], the present writer found that very few published policies could be considered either systematic, rationally argued or coherently structured across a framework of needs, goals, policy, implementation and evaluation [Ingram 1989]. Most policies, in fact, tend to remain a collection of "good ideas", often "motherhood" statements lacking in rigour and rationale, formulated incidentally to other things (such as immigration policy) or containing good recommendations that founder on implementation practices that pay little regard to quality and lack effective evaluation mechanisms.

II BRIEF HISTORY OF LANGUAGE POLICY-MAKING IN AUSTRALIA

Australia did not undertake the task of developing and formalizing language policy with alacrity or evident enthusiasm, at least for a long time. Rather, it was almost forced to confront the necessity after decades of language failure, ad hoc decision-making, a growing feeling of being unable to cope with the rest of its world region, and by sheer economic necessity. In the 1960's, Australia became conscious of its lack of skills in Asian languages and cultures and the Federal Government commissioned the Auchmuty report on the teaching of Asian languages and cultures [Commonwealth Advisory Committee 1970]. Realistically, this report had minimal effect on the language education system, at least if that effect were to be measured in terms of the number of students in the Australian education system actually developing proficiency in Asian languages. Throughout the 1970's there was much interest in the concept of multiculturalism and many well-intentioned statements were made in support of the teaching of so-called community languages. Again, despite the many reports and funded projects, the overall effect on the numbers of students developing skills in languages other than English in Australian schools was negligible and, in fact, enrolment numbers continued to decline. The most positive effect of these developments was on the number of languages represented in the school system: these increased substantially to a point where, by the mid-1980's, there were over thirty and, in the 1990's, about 40 different languages formally taught.

For my own part, after spending much of the 1970's urging schools to introduce languages, talking to school principals and to parent organizations, it seemed to me that nothing would be achieved unless Australia were to formally develop and adopt a national policy on languages so that there was a systematic attempt to identify language needs and to ensure that the whole education system from teacher supply to syllabus development to class teaching was planned to meet them. Consequently, through the Australian Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations and the Applied Linguistics Association of Australia, I started preparing

submissions and engaging in other activities to promote the concept of a national policy on languages and of a national languages institute to oversight the implementation of the policy. Initially these proposals were quite literally ridiculed by those who believed that Australian politicians and bureaucrats were too antagonistic to language learning to accept such proposals. Eventually, however, many organizations, many academics and increasing numbers of politicians were talking about the need for a national language policy and, in 1982, the matter of a national policy on languages was referred to the Senate Standing Committee on Education and the Arts which produced a report in December 1984 that eventually led to the formal adoption in 1987 of a national policy on languages. Since then all States and Territories have also formalized and adopted their own State or Territory policy on language education. One of the most recent of these is in Queensland where, in 1990, the Centre for Applied Linguistics and Languages at Griffith University was commissioned to advise on a language education policy for Queensland schools. The recommendations made by Glyn John and myself in that report have now been essentially adopted as the blueprint for language policy in Queensland for the next decade. Because the form in which we couched those recommendations was, I believe, significant to the whole activity of language policy-making, I shall make further reference to that report as I proceed.

III NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS AS MOTIVATING FACTORS

In Australia, possibly the strongest motive for language policy development has been a realization first voiced significantly at the National Languages Conference in Adelaide in 1986 that Australian economic development was suffering from the national inability to communicate with and understand potential trading partners, an inability to promote its products in the most effective way possible with trading partners and potential customers, and a failure on the part of industry to develop and offer for sale products that matched the real needs of the overseas buyers. In other words, there can be little doubt that the main stimulus in the last 5 years for language policy development and implementation has been economic but, in addition, and especially in the first half of the 1980's, there was the motivation that arose from realizing that Australia was a multicultural, multilingual and multiracial society, that, if Australia is to benefit in the richest possible way from the cultural and linguistic resources brought here since the late 1940's through the immigration programme, the people had to be educated to understand their society and those who had skills in languages other than English had to be given the opportunity to maintain and develop them.

In fact, this last motivation for national policies on languages had been very strong but uncoordinated in Australia in the 1970's; it had slipped in significance, mainly, I believe, because of the surfeiting that comes from an excess of motherhood statements and insufficient rigour in policy-formulation and implementation - like eating too much honey without the benefit of bread! This issue will, however, assume more salience again in the future, not only in Australia but world-wide, if current activities of

the World Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations (FIPLV) are brought to fruition.

The FIPLV is a UNESCO Status B advisory organization, the international body that unites language teachers in national multilingual associations in, at present, some 65 countries and some 6 international unilingual associations. A major activity of the FIPLV over the last two years has been the development of a Universal Declaration of Language Rights. Significant changes have occurred in the development of policies in many countries (including Australia) as a result of the adoption by the United Nations or one of its related bodies of international declarations on such wide-ranging topics as capital punishment, racial discrimination, human rights, freedom to form trade unions, and so on. It is hoped that the proposed Universal Declaration of Language Rights might have a similar effect.

The Universal Declaration of Language Rights [see *AFMLTA Information BULLETIN*, NO 34, August 1990, pp. 2-7], which FIPLV is in the process of developing for sending on to UNESCO and, hopefully, to the United Nations, essentially recognizes, amongst other things, every child's right to learn another language of his or her own choice. Key clauses in the current (i.e., April 1990) version include:

> "1. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, the language of the linguistic group into which he or she is born...
>
> "2. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, either the official language or one of the official languages of that State, according to his or her own choice...
>
> "3. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, at least one further language, chosen from a diversified range of languages, for the specific purpose of enhancing international understanding.
>
> "4. Everyone has the right to be taught, within the provision of Basic State Education, to a level which ensures that he or she can communicate fluently and accurately, orally and in writing, in each of the languages specified [above]...
>
> "6. Everyone has the right to learn any language or languages.
>
> "7. Everyone has the right to identify with any language, irrespective of its territorial boundaries, and to have the exercising of this right respected..."

Additional recommendations suggest that UNESCO and possibly the United Nations will be asked to adopt this Declaration, language rights in all nations are to be monitored, and member associations of FIPLV are asked to seek to persuade their governments to elaborate and implement policies that reflect these language rights. In the Australian context, it is significant that, underlying the Declaration, is the unambiguous assumption that monolinguals are unjustly deprived and must be given the opportunity to increase their language skills and broaden their cross-cultural understanding through learning another language. In addition, the Declaration gives individuals the unambiguous right to select the language or languages that meet their needs or interests and consequently language policy-makers will have to consider how, within the limitations of resources available and the consequent need to set priorities, it is possible to provide the necessary freedom of choice. It is expected that the development of the Universal Declaration of Language Rights will be taken a further step at the forthcoming World Congress on Language Learning to be held in Hungary in August this year, when a special symposium is to be held, with UNESCO support, on languages and human rights.

However, such fine ideals as are espoused in the Universal Declaration of Language Rights will be realised only when they are recognized through well-constructed national and regional language and language education policies and I would like to take a few minutes to consider the form that such policies desirably should take. Though I will be speaking about theoretical issues that underlie the preparation of language policies, these are illustrated in the recently adopted Queensland language education policy. Regrettably they are not well illustrated in the current national policy on languages adopted in 1987 by the Federal Government and least of all in the review of language policy in Australia represented in the Green Paper recently released by the Federal Minister for Employment, Education and Training.

IV THE NATURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY-MAKING

Policy-making is decision-making or problem-solving, i.e., it entails making decisions about languages, about language learning, about how to satisfy the language-related needs of society and individuals or it entails solving "problems" such as how to maintain and extend the level of skills in certain languages, how to ensure a harmonious and mutually rewarding multicultural society, how to maximize the effectiveness of trade, how to maximize students' intellectual development, and so on. Language policy-making may be either covert, as it was in Australia in the 1970's, or it may be overt, as it has become in Australia through the 1980's, and increasingly around the world.

In the sense of being problem-oriented, i.e., in that they seek to solve particular language-related "problems" that exist in a society, language policy-making and language-in-education planning are, like their parent discipline of applied linguistics, essentially practical activities but, also like applied linguistics, they are theoretical in the sense of being both theory-based and theory-making [see Ingram 1980 where the nature of applied linguistics has been discussed]. Rational policy-making is theory-based in the sense that, like applied linguistics, it draws on the fundamental sciences that inform the problem to be solved. In language policy-making, the contributory sciences include the linguistic sciences (e.g., theoretical linguistics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and so on) but also any other field that informs the language problem (e.g., political science, demographic geography, psychology, economics, marketing, and so on). The policy-makers' task is to identify and draw on the relevant sciences, seek insights that elucidate the essential nature of the problem, and deduce possible solutions. If this is to occur, then the policy-makers must have available both the theoretical knowledge and the practical experience of the problem situation that make the characteristics of the problem clear and enable them to derive adequate insights and deduce viable solutions. If either their knowledge or experience is inadequate, then their policy and its implementation will be defective. This notion of policy-making must, therefore, lead one to question the "management principle" in decision-making, i.e., the practice popular amongst bureaucrats of putting "eminent persons", political affiliates, "managers", general educationalists, or accountants, into decision-making or policy-making positions rather than experienced and qualified practitioners, relevant academics, or similar experts. This problem is well illustrated in the poverty and confusion of the Australian Government's Green Paper on language policy which was written, apparently, by a task force of three persons in the Federal Department of Employment, Education and Training, two or those three persons acknowledging no expertise in language or language policy.

Policy-making is also "theory-making" because the policy is essentially a theory about the nature of the problem and how to resolve it. National language policy-making, for example, essentially proposes a theory or policy about the nature of the society's language needs at the societal, group or individual levels and how to meet these needs. As a "theory", its validity has to be tested and hence evaluation is an essential (but often omitted) phase of rational policy-making. Because it was largely omitted from the 1987 national policy on languages and hence because there was no significant review and on-going policy development mechanism built into that policy, the Government has found it necessary to promulgate its Green Paper with the expectation of a White Paper in mid-1991. One effect of this is, rightly or wrongly, to present the Government as resiling from its 1987 policy, and attracting considerable criticism as a result.

Figure 1 illustrates the structure of this process for the parent discipline of applied linguistics. Figure 2 illustrates it for language policy-making or language-in-education planning.

In summary, the rational approach to policy-making entails a rational understanding of the issues involved, the development of insights into the problem to be resolved, thence the postulation of a "theory", "principles" or approach to solving the problem, the clear identification of the ultimate goals to be achieved and the intermediate objectives to be sought, and the implementation steps to be taken. In addition, for the "theory", principles or policy to be tested and for the whole process to be self-correcting of error or inadequacies, it must include an evaluation process as an integral part of the policy-making or decision-making process. This approach is both theory-based and theory-making but it is also research-based in three senses: first, that research is needed to develop the fundamental sciences on which the whole rational process depends; second, that research is needed to identify the nature of the problem to be resolved, the needs to be met, the goals and objectives to be sought, and the methodology or implementation to be adopted; and third, that evaluation, which is research *par excellence*, is an integral part of the process and impacts on all stages from the fundamental sciences to policy formulation and implementation.

V THE STRUCTURE OF LANGUAGE POLICY

The nature of language policy-making or language-in-education planning just discussed leads to clear implications for the structure of a rationally developed language or language education policy. The basic "problem" to be resolved is how to maintain and develop the society's language resources and how to meet the society's and individuals' language-related needs. Hence a policy must be based on the present and changing nature of the society and commence with a description of the features of the society that are relevant in identifying present and future language needs and in identifying the steps to be taken to satisfy them. Thence the policy must specify the goals and objectives that it is seeking to achieve and enunciate the policy proposals. However, idealistic policy statements unrelated to how they can be realised in practice are practically worthless since the very fact that they cannot be implemented suggests that they are based on a deficient analysis of the problem situation; hence, the policy must include actual implementation recommendations that enable each policy proposal to be related to the actual real-life situation and to be realised in practice. Since rational policy is justified and founded in the theoretical sciences and in an analysis of the problem situation and since the implementation proposals must be logically related to the policy proposals and justifiable from an understanding of the nature of language and of the other relevant fundamental sciences, all the elements of the policy must be justified and the rationale must be made obvious. In addition, as already argued, evaluation is an integral part of policy-making both to assess the validity of the contributory sciences on which the insights leading to the resolution of the problem are based and to ensure that the policy proposals and implementation recommendations are justifiable and adequate. Consequently, evaluation is an integral part of the structure of a rational and rigorous policy and leads to the on-going development and fine-tuning of the policy itself. In brief, a rational policy will contain at least the following elements:

* a description of the nature of the society the policy is to serve;

* a statement of needs (both societal and personal);

* policy proposals;

* implementation recommendations;

* indicators of success or the basis for the evaluation of the policy and its implementation; and

* a summary rationale for the basis of the policy and for each policy proposal and implementation recommendation.

In the Queensland language education policy prepared by Glyn John and the present writer [Ingram and John 1990], the policy document started with a description of the nature of Queensland society identifying, in particular, the following features:

* the multicultural, multilingual and multiracial composition of its population;

* the dominance of English;

* Queensland's economic dependence on foreign trade, its economic integration with the rest of the world especially with non-English speaking countries;

* its excessive reliance in the past on primary products and the need, if it is to be economically secure and successful, to develop its level of so-called "elaborately transformed manufactures"; and

* its vast geographical area and the relative isolation of many of its towns and schools.

This brief identification of the nature of Queensland society led to the identification of certain corollary needs, specifically:

* the need to develop in all Queensland children those attitudes that will enable them to live harmoniously and profitably in the multicultural Queensland and world societies of which they are a part;

* the need for all Queenslanders to have the opportunity to develop English skills to the level of proficiency that meets their needs and interests and the need to develop skills in English and other languages that will ensure that all persons have access to available services either directly through the language they speak or with the assistance of interpreters and translators;

* the need to produce, promote and market its products in the world markets with maximum marketing effectiveness; and

* the need, in devising language education policy and its implementation, to make recommendations that enable all Queenslanders to have access to the learning of other languages (and specifically the language that meets their own needs and interests) wherever they might be located in the State.

From here, the Queensland language education policy [Ingram and John 1990] goes on to set goals and objectives, identify policy proposals and implementation recommendations, and indicate how the policy's success or failure may be determined.

In order to emphasize the rational nature of the policy and the integration of all its parts, the policy is summarised in a section of considerable theoretical importance called the "Rational Frameworks" which takes all the ninety-four recommendations and sets them in a table with interrelated columns headed

* Needs (Societal and Individual)

* Goals and Objectives

* Policy Recommendations

* Implementation Proposals

* Indicators of Success

* Rationale

VI CONCLUSION

The intention of this paper has been to discuss ways in which language policy-making and language-in-education planning can be made more rational, systematic, progressive and needs-related and to emphasize that they must be made more rigorous if they are to serve the dual, indeed complementary, ends of human rights, especially language rights, and national development.

Although languages have been taught and learned as second and foreign languages for thousands of years, it has been only recently that formal and systematic language policy-making seems to have evolved. This may reflect, to some extent, the fact that the learning of other languages is such an integral part of ordinary everyday life in most of the world that it does not require discrete formalized policy-making, except where a language such as English, by virtue of political and economic accidents of history, assumed linguistic hegemony to the disadvantage of the people in the English-speaking countries. In addition, however, there have been increasing pressures on languages and on educational and social systems as a result of easier transport, improved communications, the lowering of political barriers between nations, increased world trade and the economic interdependence of nations, and much increased migration and tourism. Probably another factor has been the development of applied linguistics and, in particular, language proficiency measurement, the latter being significant because it has enabled planners to measure resources and needs and set meaningful targets. As applied linguistics continues to develop and provide the tools that language policy-makers need and as the external forces stimulating language policy development continue and inevitably escalate, we can expect further development in language policy-making, more informed and rational language-in-education planning, and hopefully more systematic and effective language teaching.

These are not, of course, just idealistic hopes whose sole value lies in academic niceties since, first, we are now seeing examples of rational language policy-making and language-in-education planning starting to emerge and, in any case, in proposing such policies, we are ultimately seeking a world that is characterised less by conflict and the mobilization of armaments, such as we have seen in recent months, and more by international and inter-cultural understanding and tolerance. It is easy, expensive but useless for the world's peoples to spend billions of dollars in destroying each other with armaments; such actions lead to less understanding, indeed to deliberate misunderstanding and misrepresentation by politicians on all sides who have to convince the people to support their games. The only answer to world peace, apart possibly from the teachings of the great religions, is through informed language policy-making leading to informed language-in-education planning, high quality language teaching, and the gradual development in each generation of an ability to identify with others whatever their culture and language, the ability to understand and accept others. That, as Saint-Exupery has said, is the hard lesson: it is easy to create weapons and throw them at each other; it is much harder to accept that the only answer to world peace, security and international understanding and progress is through language education and the gradual accretion in all people of an ability to understand and accept others, an understanding which can come only through stepping into their culture for a time and seeing the world through their eyes. In Saint-Exupery's words, which open the Foreword of the Queensland language education policy:

"Il est tres simple: on ne voit bien qu'avec le coeur.
L'essentiel est invisible pour les yeux."

"Mais, pour voir, il convient d'abord de participer. Cela est dur apprentissage."

In brief, improved, rational and systematic language policy-making realised through sound language-in-education planning lies at the heart of human development for the 1990's and the next century. We are starting to see emerge those techniques that will ultimately maximize that development, improve intercultural and international understanding, and hopefully minimize world conflict.

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